

TESTIMONY OF
WALTER SAMPSON
U.S. HOUSE RESOURCE COMMITTEE
HEARING ON HR 3148
JUNE 5, 2002

Honorable Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Walter G. Sampson. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak before you on H.R. 3148. It's an honor to participate in a process that makes you feel good and listened to. A process that allows individuals like me to raise issues that impact our daily lives. Yes, democracy at work is a very process past Presidents and Founding Father fought to create. A process as members of congress continue to nurture.

Where outside forces attempt to demoralize that very process but failed, we are a nation of caring people. People with big hearts. People who are committed to fight for its freedom. Gentlemen you are looking at three Alaskan Natives who are committed to fight for its freedom. Committed to make sure that the American flag continue to fly freely.

As a background information, I was born January, 1948 to Mildred and Stephen Sampson. I come from a large family I have three sisters and seven brothers. I was traditionally adopted by my grandmother, Effie Sampson whom I highly respect. She was my mother, my mentor and my teacher. I am fortunate in that I'm proud to say I fluently can speak my Inupiaq language.

I graduated from Chemawa Indian School May 1968. September of 1968 I was being drafted to the regular army, instead I volunteered and went in for a two-year service. Spent my basic and advanced individual training in Fort Lewis, Washington. After AIT my orders were to Vietnam. 10 March 1969 I first stepped into Vietnam soil as an infantryman. As a nineteen-year-old tuff and mean (that's what I thought anyway) fully committed to put my training to practice. Yes life was certainly different, but as a soldier I expected to face the elements. Ready to face death but I wasn't ready to die. But some of my comrades unfortunately didn't make it home, but I assure you they died PROUD. PROUD because they unselfishly made the sacrifice to defend the constitution of the United States. Yes my comrades did not die in vain but for a justifiable cause.

As a committed soldier I spent twelve months in vietnam, Nine and half in the field. One month as greandier, three days on a sixty machine gunner and eight and a half months radio in my back. For the service I committed I received the following Medals : National Defense Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, two Bronze Star Medals, one with oak leaf cluster and another with V Device, two Army Commendation Medals and Combat Infantry Badge.

Mr. Chairman I would like to first acknowledge your hard working into passing the Alaska Native Veterans Act which allows for those of us that did not have a chance to apply for native allotment under the original act to apply for land. I thank yo on behalf of my comrades who are missing action, died in combat, those who died after returning from war and those who are not able to be here in person to speak for themselves, again thank you. The original act which congress passed is lacking in the following areas 1] Limited only to federal land where maybe in some cases veterans are not able to select lands because of different

classifications. 2] Occupancy requirement which places a burden on the application especially if the veteran entered service for a period of time when he/she is stationed outside the state. Which means the applicant would need to meet the extensive use and occupancy requirement/ 3] Date requirement from January 69 to December 1971 is a small window of opportunity for some veterans who may have decided to make a career of the military service. With that Mr. chairman and members of the committee I want to thank you for your time and encourage you to pass HR3148.

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